

REMARKS

Claims 10-14 and 22 were presented for examination in the present application. The instant amendment cancels claims 10-14 without prejudice and adds new claims 23-26. New claims 23-26 are directed to the elected embodiment of Group II and are supported at least by original claims 1-20. Thus, claims 22-26 are presented for consideration upon entry of the instant amendment.

Applicant submitted a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement in the present application on November 30, 2005. However, a copy of this document, as considered by the Examiner, was not present in the instant Office Action. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that a copy of the submitted list, as reviewed and initialed by the Examiner, be returned to the Applicant with the next communication.

The housing member 15 in FIG. 2 has been amended to conform to the housing member illustrated in Fig. 1. The lower retaining rim 56 in FIG. 5 has been amended to conform to the lower retaining rim illustrated in Fig. 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings are respectfully requested.

Claims 10-14 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

With respect to claims 10, 13 and 14, the Office Action asserts that the claims should identify the elements in numerical sequence according to their order of introduction in the claims. Applicant submits that there is simply no basis for such a requirement in the case law, the statute, the rules, or the manual of patent examining practice. However, claims 10-14 have been cancelled and replaced by new claims 24-26 in the interest of expediting prosecution.

Claim 22 has been amended to remove the rejected language. Claim 22 has also been amended to correct obvious errors.

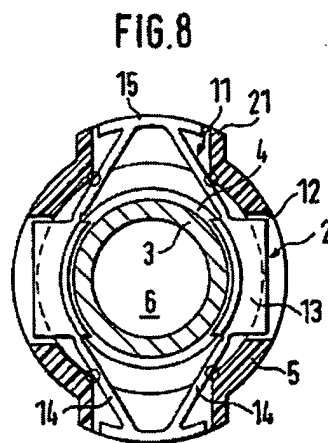
It is believed that the cancellation of claims 10-14 and the amendments to claim 22 obviate the rejections to these claims under section 112. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 10-14 and 22 under section 112 are respectfully requested.

Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,374,088 to Moretti (Moretti).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Independent claim 22 recites, in part, that the locking member is “disposed about said housing”.

Moretti discloses a securing ring or element 2 that is inserted into a receiving space of housing 1. See col. 3, lines 58-60. Thus, Moretti discloses a securing element 2 in housing 1 as best seen in Figure 8, which is reproduced below for the convenience of the Examiner.



It is respectfully submitted that the securing element in the housing of Moretti does not disclose or suggest the locking member that is “disposed about said housing” of claim 22.

Thus, claim 22, as well as claim 23 that depends therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claim 22 are respectfully requested.

Newly added claims 24-26 are also believed to be in condition for allowance. For example, independent claim 24 includes elements of original claim 13, which were indicated as being allowable. Specifically, claim 24 recites "a second retaining rim having an inwardly depending second tab". The Office Action acknowledges that the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest these features. Thus, claim 24, as well as claims 25 and 26 that depend therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicant's attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Edward L. McMahon
Registration No. 44,927
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Ohlandt, Greeley, Ruggiero & Perle, L.L.P.
One Landmark Square, 10th floor
Stamford, CT 06901-2682
Tel: (203) 327-4500
Fax: (203) 327-6401

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Applicant submits herewith two sheets of replacement drawings, which include changes to FIGS. 2 and 5.